

## Numbers 19

<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, <sup>2</sup>“This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord has commanded, saying: ‘Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. <sup>3</sup> You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; <sup>4</sup> and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>5</sup> Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. <sup>6</sup> And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. <sup>7</sup> Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. <sup>8</sup> And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. <sup>9</sup> Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin. <sup>10</sup> And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.

<sup>11</sup> ‘He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. <sup>12</sup> He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. <sup>13</sup> Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him.

<sup>14</sup> ‘This is the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who are in the tent shall be unclean seven days; <sup>15</sup> and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, is unclean. <sup>16</sup> Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

<sup>17</sup> ‘And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel. <sup>18</sup> A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. <sup>19</sup> The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.

<sup>20</sup> ‘But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean. <sup>21</sup> It shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. <sup>22</sup> Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.’ ”

### *Purifying Hearts from Dead Works*

Main idea: Christ shed His blood to cleanse our conscience from dead works

**Introduction:** the danger of defilement (v13, 20).

#### 1. **Purification that God accepts**

1. Purifying of the flesh to come near safely, cf. Heb 9:13
  2. The uncleanness does not remain upon him, because the water of purification has been sprinkled upon him (v12, 18–19)
  3. Pointing to Christ (v6, cf. Ex 12:22; Lev 14:2, 6, 49)
2. **Purification that actually works**
1. The problem isn't just one sin and one defilement. It is original sin and continued inward corruption (Ps 51:5–6). The “hyssop” is a reminder that God Himself must cleanse us.
  2. Christ's blood the means by which we are purified. The true Christian baptism, applied by Christ Himself through His Spirit, of which the water baptism is a sign (n.b. “baptisms” in Heb 9:10)
3. **Purification applied to you**
1. Christ is willing and able (cf. Mt 9:25; Lk 7:14)
  2. Just as His blood was shed once for all, our “purification water ritual” is applied once for all. But you must continually come back to the reality—Christ and His blood—to which it points.

**Conclusion:** So long as your flesh remains in you, there will be “dead works” from which you will want your conscience cleansed so that you may come rightly to worship the living God. For that, God has provided not “holy water” but His Holy Son and Holy Spirit.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

Numbers 19. These are the words of God. Now, Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron saying Is the ordinance of the law which Yahweh has commanded saying speak to the children of Israel. That they bring you a red heifer without blemish in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come.

You shall give it to Eliettes are the priest that ye may take it outside the camp and it shall be slaughtered before him. And Elliotts are the priests shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle some of its blood, seven times directly in front of the Tabernacle of meeting.

Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight its hide its flesh, its blood and its oval shall be burned. And the priest shall take cedarwood and hyssop and Scarlet. Cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes. He shall bathe in water and afterward.

He shall come into the camp. The priest shall be unclean until evening. And the one who burns it shall wash. His clothes in water, bathe in water and shall be unclean until evening. That a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and store them outside, the camp in a clean place and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification.

It is for purifying from sin. And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It will be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to

the stranger who dwells among them, He who touches the dead body of anyone, shall be unclean, seven days.

You shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day. Then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day, and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died and does not purify himself.

Defiles the Tabernacle. Of Yahweh. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean because the water purification was not sprinkled on him, his uncleanness is still on him. This is the law when a man dies in a tent. All who came into the tent and all who are in the tent shall be unclean.

Seven days. And every open vessel which has no cover fastened on it is unclean. Whoever in the open field, touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died or a bone of a man or a grave. Shall be unclean seven days. And for an unclean person, they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin.

And running water shall be put on them in a vessel. A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water. Sprinkle it on the tent. On all the vessels on the persons who are there, or on the one, who touched a bone, the slain the dad, or a grave.

The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day? And on the seventh day, he shall purify himself wash his clothes and bathe in water. And that evening, he shall be clean. But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly because he has defiled, The sanctuary of Yahweh.

The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him. He is unclean. It shall be a Perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes. And he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. Whatever the unclean person, touches shall be unclean.

And the person who touches it. Shall be unclean. Until evening. So far the reading of God's inspired and And Aaron twerked.

Quickly approached the end of the 40 years. There's not much told us About that time until we come now into the 40th year and We'll find ourselves at the beginning of the next chapter back in the wilderness of Zinn. The place from which the spies were sent on on the border of the promised land and That also means that we are coming now to the death of Miriam and the death of Aaron.

Uh, right? In chapter 20. And we see leasar here. Identified. As a priest who is going to do this. The idea that Although Aaron is going to die, the priesthood shall continue in his family. And after all the AIDS are as mentioned in verse 4, it changes generically to the priest in verse six and following, because there is a danger continuing among the people of God in that they have God and his Holiness, tabernacling among them.

Is something that you and I should feel more keenly than we do. That we are members of his church that we are week by week in the assembly gathering, on the Lord's, day Drawing Near to the living, and holy God. And that if we are touched with death, if we are defiled by death, that we risk profaning, the worship of God, if we do not make use of Christ and his once, for all sacrifice, which has been signified to us in our baptisms, Indeed, we see in verse 13.

And then verse 20, the great danger. The great problem that the instructions in this chapter addresses, Um, address. Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died and does not

purify himself. Defiles says verse 13, the Tabernacle of Yahweh Then in verse 20, The man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly because he has defiled the sanctuary.

The holy place. Of. Yahweh. And so there is this great danger that the people of the Lord would by contact with death. That does not go purified. That goes unpurified, that is not addressed or cleansed would defile. God's Tabernacle would defile his Holiness in the assembly. The way that Hebrews chapter 9, and we're going to visit More fully at one point refers to this as it talks about these baptisms.

Uh, new King, James translates, Washings. But the word is is baptisms and these other rituals That were meant to purify from Death to purify the flesh in order to draw near to God. And then he comes and says, how much more does the blood of Christ sanctify? Your conscience from dead works, Those works that come from us and not from Christ.

Those works that come from what remains from our former nature. You see every one of our sins is not just offensive in that, it breaks God's law. Not just offensive in that, it despises, God's glory. It's as offensive because it comes from Death, that comes from that dead man, that we were apart from Christ needing.

Resurrection it defiles. Worship of God, if we do not come cleansed by Christ and by his Sacrifice. And the Lord Jesus praise God. Has given us a washing given us a baptism even in the New Covenant even in the administration of the Covenant of Grace. That is not under the law of Moses, and the priesthood of Aaron and his sons, But in the administration of the Covenant of Grace that is under Christ as Prophet priest and King.

He has given us a baptism, a washing To direct our consciences to him. And so as we consider this particular baptism this particular washing, Uh, in Numbers Chapter 19, we'll consider it under three headings, three main ideas. First that there is a purification that God accepts That even for these Sinners, who would otherwise defile the Tabernacle or the sanctuary, he gives them a washing ritual.

Uh, for the sake of, which he is willing to consider his Tabernacle and his Sanctuary, not defiled, by their worship. Uh, how wonderful that is. But of course, it isn't the washing ritual that cleanses He accepts the washing ritual because there is a purification that actually works that of his son our Lord Jesus.

And so that's the second idea that we'll consider and then in the last Will consider in our own cases how to make application. Of this purification to ourselves. First, then this purification that God accepts. And if you do have a copy of the word of God, I invite you to turn in it to Hebrews chapter 9 because we'll keep coming back here.

It's always helpful when God himself has interpreted and applied the passage that you are seeking to understand. And he's referring to the Earthly service of the Earthly Tabernacle. I'm going to begin in verse 9. He says it was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience.

Concerned only with foods and drinks various baptisms and fleshly ordinances. Imposed until the time of reformation But Christ came as high priest of the good things to come with the greater and more perfect Tabernacle not made with hands. That is not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves.

But with his own blood, he entered the most holy place once for all having obtained Eternal Redemption. A lot of bowls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean. Sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh. How much more shall the blood of Christ? Who through the Eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God?

Cleanse your conscience from dead works. To serve the Living God. And so you hear how? This particular ritual where the high priest would go outside the camp. He would take this red heifer, outside the camp and the red heifer would have been bred for this. It would be very strange to have.

A beast of strength that you didn't put to use in some way, but this one was never allowed to be used for anything else. And this one, of course, would have to be bred to be kept red, so that it would be useful. So for the entire life of this heifer, it would be understood that it was being prepared, particularly in order to be burned outside the camp and it's burned along with these other red things that have are associated perhaps because they are red.

And therefore associated with blood. Cedar wood and the Scarlet thread both of which would be red. And then the sprinkling the use of hyssop for sprinkling these, these things we've all seen already is pointing to Christ. We've seen this for instance, during the Passover, the use of the hyssop branch and applying the blood to the sides and the top of the door and then in the, uh, the leper who has been healed and his cleansing and Leviticus 14.

If you've grabbed an outline, you can see there in verse 2 verse 6. And, in verse 49, and so they would have. Uh, they would have this red, heifer, that was burned with these things. It would be burned entirely to ash and then the ashes were stored in a clean place outside the camp.

So that whenever water or purification was needed, they could go. And they could get some of these ashes and put it in the vessel and they would need. Uh, it says running in the ESV, the word is living. Usually, if they could get running water, you would get running water at the very least.

You would get cold water. Fresh clean water, you'd you'd mix it with the ashes. And then you just dip, the hyssop branch. And then and who was receiving it? Well, that was one of these baptisms that Hebrews 9 verse 10 is talking about and Hebrews 9 verse 13. Includes very prominently.

The ashes of a heifer, sprinkling, the unclean sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh. And that is amazing. Because there's not there's no inherent righteousness or goodness or cleansing power in the ashes of a red heifer. Yet. God gives them this. This ritual, this procedure this ceremonial law and he says, I will accept you as clean.

I will accept you as clean for my worship, even if you have been touched by death, defiled by death, Here is a ritual in which you will be physically accepted and not be cut off from the people. And the, the Tabernacle and the sanctuary won't be defiled upon you.

There's an exchange. Uh, that is symbolized in taking place and you can see that exchange, I think most clearly in verse 13. When it's talking about what if this is not done. And at the end of verse 13, he says that the person who does not purify himself, this way shall be cut off from Israel.

He shall be unclean because the water of purification was not sprinkled on in his uncleanness is still on him. And so there's an exchange that is pointing to Christ. Christ is the one who dies

in our place. The very similar. You know, there are many similarities between this and the Passover ritual with the substitute lamb and the blood that is splattered with with the hyssop.

And so it's not the ashes of a heifer. Uh, and the mixture with fresh water and the inclusion of Cedar wood and Scarlet thread. And the use of a hyssop branch. God is not giving here a a recipe for spiritually, magical stuff that can actually take your uncleanness away.

It is because God is taking away. The sins of the world by his son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. That he gives them this sacramental. The ceremonial procedure that he accepts for the purification of the flesh. But if they ever trusted in the procedure, that God gave them, they actually wouldn't be purified in the heart before.

God, they wouldn't be purified in the conscience even if they did all of these things. Hebrews 9 tells us it wasn't able to cleanse their conscience. It could cleanse their flesh, so that they could attend worship bodily and be a part of the assembly. But it couldn't cleanse their conscience before God that they could draw near to him in their souls.

They would know that they had a defilement. That nothing. But a righteousness from God, a worthy substitute. Could take away. And so that brings us from the purification that God accepted which pointed to Christ. To the purification, that actually works Christ himself, the purification for which David was singing.

Because, We have much bigger problems than that. We might be in the same tent where someone dies. Or there might be a tomb that was not whitewashed well enough. Uh, that you could. That you could see from a distance and make sure that you Avoided stumbling into. Or or touching the grave.

You remember? When the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees whitewashed tombs? He was. Um, He was referring to something that they were. That their culture was familiar with Because if you were in danger of defiling the sanctuary by touching a grave, that even if you were out in the field or whatever, like we just read in Numbers Chapter 19, then you would want those Graves.

Well marked. Well, what was the reason that they had to be? Well because there was death in them. And that was the problem that the Pharisees had They didn't realize that there was death. In. And so the purification that actually works is not the ritual, it's not the ceremony.

As the purification that the god of life himself gives to Sinners. Who have death and then that's what, that's what David is crying out for in one of the most familiar. Psalms Psalm 51. You remember in verse 5 His problem isn't just. The external sin. Committed with Bathsheba, with his eyeballs, or Or in.

Having Uriah murdered. His problem is that he sins because he's a sinner. His problem is original sin. So he hits the original sin in verse five. I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin, my mother conceived, me. It's not just that he was a sinner once but that he still is a sinner now.

So it's not just that he has sinful thoughts and words and deeds, but even in his inner heart, He still has that remaining sinfulness so verse six, you desire truth in the inward Parts. In the hidden part, you will make me to know wisdom. And then he says, Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Now he's not asking God. To take a hyssa branch and dip it in water and wash him down with the hyssop branch with the water, and that he would be whiter than snow that way. You hear what he's saying? He's saying I see o God that

you have given this ritual, washing that cannot cleanse But you God, when you cleanse a man is genuinely cleaned.

That there is a Salvation from God, by his power, by his life, by his righteousness, by his worthiness, that actually cleanses, the conscience that actually makes you holy so that you can draw near to the Living God despite how sinful you still are. And yet by the cleansing that God gives in Christ and his blood, you draw near to God.

And you don't defile him. His Holiness is hallowed. When we come to him that way, Christ's blood. Then is the means by which we are washed. You see Christian water baptism. Is not what cleanses you. It is by the application of Christ's blood to you by Christ's The true Christian baptism is the one that John told those, who are gathering to him and having his baptism, they needed to have from Jesus.

That. Yeah, John was applying water but what could that water do for you? But God who could make children for of Abraham out of stones that he was coming in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and he would wash with the Holy Spirit. He would baptize you with his holy Spirit and what does the Holy Spirit do?

He gives you life and Faith to believe into Jesus says that the blood of Jesus is counted for you and applied to you and you're cleansed from your guilt, you're cleansed from your sin. And when you realize that you have been committing dead works, And you've got less than seven days.

Because you can't do a seven day ritual between when you sin and the next Lord's Day. The math doesn't work does it? But the Lord Jesus Christ has died. Once for all and his blood actually cleanses, this is one of the reasons why you don't have to go back, get baptized again every time you feel defiled just as his blood genuinely cleanses once for all in the Christian Life.

Your baptism is once for all As the water baptism that you receive on Earth, reminds you of announces to you, the spirit baptism that Christ gives from When he pours at his Spirit upon you, And this is one of the reasons why it's pouring or sprinkling. It's God cleansing us with as it were Christ, the lord, the Creator, the god-man pouring, his Spirit upon us.

That's the purification that actually works. It actually takes away guilt. It actually takes away. Defilement, which is amazing. Which is amazing because in case you missed it in Numbers Chapter 19, as we were reading. Everyone gets unclean that's involved in this process. The guy who brings uh, the calf out and starts at Burning, he's unclean Eleazar who takes some of the calves blood.

He's unclean, neither of them are allowed to take the ashes because they're not clean. They need to find a clean guy, so they get a clean guy to grab the ashes and take them out. Guess what happens to the clean guy who takes the ashes out? He's made unclean.

Then in the purification ritual, the clean guy who has to take the hyssop. And well, first, there's the clean guy, who, who combines the water with the ashes? He touched the water of purification. Now, he's unclean. And then there's the clean guy who dips the hyssop in the water to sprinkle.

The man on the third day and the seventh and he gets to be unclean. How are we ever going to find someone who is inherently clean enough inherently. Holy enough. That he can touch us. And instead of him becoming unclean we become clean. It is the Lord Jesus. Don't you see him?

In Matthew chapter 9, which we have heard here not too long ago and the little girl is dead. Uh oh Dad who what happens to anyone who touches her kids? They're made unclean, right? Anyone except Jesus, do you remember? How he raised her Matthew didn't even tell us about, you know, little girl get up in an Aramaic, dalitha Kumi Took her by the hand, and she arose.

And he presented her to her parents, he touched her. And instead of her death defiling him, his life, overcame her death, and she was made alive. And then in Luke chapter 7, you remember, the Widow who had had the only son and now she was bereaved and they were having the funeral and and the the coffin was uh, or the the body and the coffin.

It was prepared. I think New King James translates, coffin is being carried to the street, and Jesus is there. And what does Jesus do? He reached out and he, he touched the coffin. And everyone stopped. The funeral stopped Sola all the grieving stops. Everyone is just shocked because this this Rabbi just intentionally defiled himself.

Oh no. But it turns out he's okay. Because when Jesus touches the coffin he raises her son and he's not dead but alive. How great is the Purity, the life, the Holiness, the righteousness of Jesus, And if you have believed in Jesus Christ, you are united to him and when you feel that you are, defiled because you've committed a sin and that came from, your former nature that came from the death that remains in you.

And you say, I've been defiled by my dead works. I'm supposed to be doing live Works. These good works, that I've been saved, that father has prepared beforehand for me to walk in and that that I do out of my new nature and I Do by Christ's spirit. And I do by the Life of Christ.

The, the spirit has worked in me. That's how I'm supposed to be living, but here I spoke out of my flesh. I thought out of my flesh, I acted out of my flesh. I acted out of my death and I'm defiled. And how can I come and worship God?

Your heart and your mind and your voice to him to cry out. To consider you in Christ to cleanse your conscience again. So that your heart, Sprinkled clean. From that evil conscience from those dead Works. So, Here is one of the great ways for you to make good use of to improve your baptism to your Christian.

That you would remember that just as the water of baptism was applied to you once for all. We're not those superstitious sects. Like the papists, or the Eastern Orthodox. Who are still mixing up for themselves batches of holy water? There is no holy water. That belonged to the priesthood of Aaron, it doesn't belong to the priesthood of Christ.

And treating physical water that way. Now is a Superstition that forgets, the blood of Jesus has been shed. Once for all and the water of baptism is made holy by its application in the name of the father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Use in the sacrament of baptism.

The water has no intrinsic Holiness whatsoever. But you remember you are baptized just the once. Because Jesus's blood only had to be shed for once. And it never runs out of cleansing power. To take care of your defilement, to wash you from being clean, so that you can come to the Living God in his worship.

And rather than you defiling him and his presence and his worship. He cleanses you. And your his life, overcomes your death and his Holiness. Overcomes your iniquity and your guilt and your stain. You come out, fresh. In the Lord Jesus Christ. So long as your flesh remains in you.



So long as you are in this life in this world, there will be those dead works that you commit We are unable to escape it. This whole lifelong. And whenever we are aware that, that death has come out of us. We will desire. We will desire to have our conscience cleansed for that.

God has not provided holy water. He has provided his holy son. Applied to you, by his holy. So that you may be clean. And come to him. Amen, let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, how we thank you for what you did for your people in numbers, 19. We do not know Lord how many of them understood it even in our own day, there are very few Who understand their baptisms?

Well and so we thank you. Also for Hebrews 9 and the perfect instruction and application that your Holy Spirit has made even of the passage that was before us this afternoon. Now give us o God. Use of our baptisms to stir up and strengthen our faith. In the Lord, Jesus Christ to come to him for the cleansing out of which he never runs out for from him flows rivers of Living Water.

And we pray that you would keep us from dead works. But oh Lord, when we commit them. Return us to our savior and remind us of our baptisms. That we may be may have our consciences cleansed from those dead Works and approach you to serve to worship the Living God in Christ in his name, we ask it.

Amen.